

REMARKS

Claims 1-8, all the claims pending in the application, stand rejected. Applicants have amended claims 1, 3, 4, 6 and 7. Claim 2 is canceled.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1-8 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Namco (JP 2000-61142). This rejection is traversed for at least the following reasons.

As a preliminary matter, the rejection is moot with regard to claim 2, as the claim is canceled and its content included in amended claim 1.

Claim 1

The invention concerns a video game and, in particular, the control of the movement of a character 100 that holds an “attack means,” which is exemplified by a machine gun 101 in the preferred embodiment (see page 10, lines 11-23). A signal input means in the form of a controller (Figs. 2A, 2B) includes buttons (34) that can issue a direction instruction signal and cause the character to move in a desired direction (34U, 34L, 34R, 34D). The controller also includes a button R2 that provides an attack instruction signal. In the absence of an attack instruction signal, direction instruction signals will result in conventional movement of the character. However, with the input of an attack instruction signal, the input of direction instruction signals will result in the change of “an attack direction resulting from the attack means,” as specified in original claim 1.

The action of a character during an attack, when the attack button R2 and the direction button 34 are operated, has unique features.

Restricted Movement of the Character

As explained at pages 9-10 with regard to Fig. 3, during an attack when the auxiliary button R2 is depressed, the game character 100 moves its upper body, while the lower half of the body is kept stationary, and the attack means (gun 101 barrel) changes in response thereto when the direction key 34 is depressed. Thus, there is no movement of the entire character, and only a change in a part of the character occurs.

Limitation to Changes in Posture

The only permitted movement involves a change in posture of the game character and a change in the position and posture of the machine gun 101. Thus, in the attack mode that is implemented by pressing button R2, where the direction button 34 is operated in the up, down, right or left direction, the lower half of the characters body is kept stationary while the upper half of the character's body assumes a new posture along with the gun (attack means).

Amendment of Claim 1

This combined feature of restricted movement coupled with a change in posture, which is reflected in part in original claim 2, is not found in the prior art. Thus, Applicants have amended claim 1 to recite the content of claim 2 together with the specific additional requirement that a posture is changed.

As explained in the application with regard to Figs. 5-9, changing posture means that the characters body above the waist will move in a predetermined and realistic fashion, as explained at pages 10-15. This capability is the result of pre-established relationships among bone elements that define the character and move within a virtual character space so that the attack means is appropriately directed in accordance with the players command.

Namco

The pertinent teachings in Namco may be found at paragraphs [0081] - [0090], which concern a fighting game that is controlled by a joystick type controller 60. The 3D lever controller 60 is operated into conjunction with other buttons 62, 63, including an attack button 66. As explained at paragraph [0086], the operation of the attack button 66 in combination with the 3D lever 60 will result in changes of the attack direction by a fighter 56.

No Character Stationary Part

Notably, in the description provided in Namco, there is no teaching or suggestion that a part of the character would remain stationary or restricted, as set forth in original claim 2 and now set forth in amended claim 1. The absence of this capability means that the fighter 56 in Namco cannot give a realistic appearance when engaged in combat during the game. This provides a significant disadvantage.

No Change in Posture

Further, contrary to the recitation in amended claim 1, there is no teaching or suggestion that a change of posture may result. This again precludes a realistic illustration and animation of a character under game combat conditions.

The absence of the two limitations combined, namely, restricted movement of a portion of the game character coupled with a change in posture of the game character, will prevent achievement of a realistic capability in Namco. Indeed, the movement in Namco would appear to be somewhat “wooden” and artificial, thereby depriving the player of optimum enjoyment of the combat situation.

Claims 3, 4 and 5

These claims would be allowable for the reasons given with regard to claim 1.

Further, with regard to claim 3, there is a recitation of parts data representing a posture and relative position from a given origin of each part of a game character. Further, there is parts data partial updating means that updates the data based on the instructions inputted by a user. Finally, there is no teaching that the attack direction resulting from the attack means is determined on the basis of the part of the parts data stored by the parts data storage means.

These features are not found in Namco. Specifically, there is no teaching or suggestion that various parts of a character would be identified, characterized as data and stored for subsequent updating as a character is instructed to move during an attack. Also, there is no teaching that the direction of an attack would be based on such data.

Claim 4 further requires a character origin coordinate storage means for storing position coordinates in virtual space of a character origin set in the game character. There is no teaching or suggestion that such coordinate system should be applied in Namco.

The Examiner refers to a partial translation in paragraphs 3-4 of Namco. However, Namco merely references a three-dimensional space (object space). There is no teaching or suggestion as to how the coordinate system is defined and how the character movement is prescribed by data relating to the character coordinate system. Thus, Namco is deficient in failing to teach the specific arrangement set forth by the Applicant.

Applicants have amended these claims to specify that within the coordinate system, certain linkages related to the body structure of the character are provided. This feature is not found in Namco.

Claim 5 requires continuous or intermittent attack, and would be patentable for reasons given for claim 1.

Claim 6

This independent claim has been amended in the same manner as claim 1. Thus, this claim would be patentable over Namco.

Claim 7

This independent claim has been amended in the same manner as claim 1. Here again, this claim would be patentable for the reasons given with regard to claim 1.

Claim 8

This claim would be patentable for reasons given with regard to parent claim 7.

Conclusion

In sum, Applicants respectfully submit that the presently amended claims are patentable over Namco.

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,
/Alan J. Kasper/

SUGHRUE MION, PLLC
Telephone: (202) 293-7060
Facsimile: (202) 293-7860

Alan J. Kasper
Registration No. 25,426
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